

Genius Loci: Introducing a Place-conscious Approach to Management Education

Michael Sheridan

School of Business,
State University of New York at New Paltz, USA
Email: sheridam@newpaltz.edu

Abstract

The current management curriculum tends to focus on large, context-free corporations, despite the fact that some other disciplines recognize that localized learning and a sense of place can enhance their pedagogical strategies. The purpose of this article is to advocate for the diffusion of place-conscious management education (PCME) in order to develop students' tacit knowledge and better address issues of sustainability within a specific location. To this end, I develop a framework for place-based management education and illustrate how each dimension can be incorporated into an MBA course on corporate sustainability. PCME contextualizes business education to nurture a deeper understanding of the interconnections between the social, environmental, and economic realms and thus can lead to more effective teaching strategies, and ultimately, greater innovation. The paper concludes with a discussion of the commonalities between existing management education concepts and PCME.

Key words: *Place-based education; management education; sustainability, tacit knowledge; MBA education.*

JEL Classification: I21

PsycINFO Classification: 3550

FoR Code: 1302; 1503

ERA Journal ID#: 35696

Introduction

'Rationality is always situational...' (Clegg & Ross-Smith, 2003, p. 90)

To suggest that management educators should adapt their pedagogy to better reflect the conditions in their local community may seem counterintuitive given today's globalized economy; however, when one considers that students experience many global issues through the lens of their local community, the argument for a place-conscious management education (PCME) begins to appear less far-fetched. Indeed, such an approach to education has been shown to be effective in addressing sustainability issues (Gruenewald, 2003) and can help to prepare students for post-graduation life as they learn to develop tacit knowledge within a specific social context (Gertler, 2003). As such, management educators have begun to recognize that a focus on place has the potential to translate abstract concepts into visceral experiences and can be an potent strategy to teach social entrepreneurship, as well as to recognize the value of indigenous knowledge (Elmes, Jiusto, Whiteman, Hersh, & Guthey, 2012; Hubbard, Kitchin, & Valentine, 2008; Jolly, Whiteman, Atkinson, & Radu, 2011; Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1977; Walck, 2003).

Yet, PCME can be applied to a broader range of topics and may achieve at least two related goals for management educators seeking to integrate sustainability into their curriculum. One, PCME may facilitate students' understanding of the concepts in the United Nations' Principles for Responsible Management Education, since a sense of place is 'a prerequisite for sustainability' (Guthey, Whiteman, & Elmes, 2014; Nations, 2015; Starik, Rands, Marcus, & Clark, 2010). Two, PCME may foster the development and dissemination of tacit knowledge, since it often occurs when the students are within close geographic proximity to the place in which such knowledge is produced (Gertler, 2003).

The purpose of this paper is to articulate the dimensions of PCME and to call attention to the unique perspective management educators can provide to the broader field of place-conscious education and sustainability. Similarities between Gruenewald's (2003) framework for place-conscious education and existing management concepts is then detailed. For each dimension, the paper discusses how these concepts can be integrated into curriculum by offering a brief case study from a MBA course on sustainability. The paper concludes with suggestions for additional pedagogical strategies for PCME.

Literature review

A Place-Conscious Approach to Education

Long the purview of geographers and regional studies scholars, place as a topic of inquiry seems to have grown, somewhat paradoxically, in concert with the proliferation of homogenous spaces, perhaps a result of human desire to seize upon 'an invariant' in a world of continuous change (Beatley, 2004; Gieryn, 2000; Lewicka, 2011, p. 209). Regardless of the motivation, place based education can be a valuable tool to promote critical-thinking skills and may be used to trace the dynamic interplay of societal, ecological, political, and economic forces that intersect in these places (Guthey et al., 2014).

A place can be defined as 'a built or natural landscape, possessing a unique geographical location, invested with meaning' (Shrivastava & Kennelly, 2013, p. 84). In order to ascribe meaning to a place, members of a community share 'a personal connection [and] encompassing feelings of identity with and attachment to a place' (Shrivastava & Kennelly, 2013, p. 84). Without shared meaning, a place is just space.

Yet, once a sense of place is established, community members are able to encounter a realm that is simultaneously regional and universal by re-centering the global forces impacting their communities (Casey, 1996; Guthey et al., 2014).

Place and non-place in management education

Until recently, few management scholars have focused on the influence of place, or the relationship between place, enterprise, and sustainability. A March 2016 *Web of Science* search for the terms 'place-based' or 'place-making' yielded 63 results in business and economics journals, only 28 of which referenced education. In contrast, the same search conducted across all disciplines generated 854 general citations of which 528 included the term 'education.' When one compares the results of business and economics to the other disciplines, it is apparent that interest is growing around place-based approaches. Yet, the literature on how to teach this approach remains fairly lean, comprising only 44% of all articles on the topic versus 62% for other disciplines.

Thus, with a few exceptions, contemporary management education has tended to overlook what Freeman and Newkirk (2008) refer to as 'the fundamental aspect of business activity;' that context-based human interaction leads to the creation of value (Freeman & Newkirk, 2008). One can trace the context-free approach to management education to the late 1950's, when the academy, skeptical of the business discipline, pressured business scholars to embrace positivism (Clegg & Ross-Smith, 2003; Freeman & Newkirk, 2008). Therefore, to bolster their legitimacy, business scholars pursued research of multi-national corporations; 'free-floating entities' upon which they could develop and test universal, context-free theories (Clegg & Ross-Smith, 2003; Freeman & Newkirk, 2008; Guthey et al., 2014; Shrivastava & Kennelly, 2013).

The failure to recognize that organizations are 'materially situated' within a place and a community may not properly prepare our students for post-graduation, as educators may fail to convey the tacit knowledge needed for success (Freeman & Newkirk, 2008; Guthey et al., 2014, p. 259). Therefore, management scholars may wish to move beyond the abstracted confines of management education (Jermier & Forbes, 2011) to ground our teaching in the places in which value creation occurs. As argued here, PCME may be able to help develop valuable community members and employees, while simultaneously connecting students to relevant global economic, ecologic, and social trends.

Gruenewald's framework for place-conscious education

In 2003, David Gruenewald constructed a theoretical framework for educators to promote theory, research and education around the concept of place by identifying five dimensions of place: perceptual, sociological, ideological, political, and ecological. Previous management educators employed it to the teaching of entrepreneurship (Elmes et al., 2012). Yet, this paper argues that this typology has untapped utility for the broader management curriculum. In fact, adapting Gruenewald's framework to management education may deepen students' knowledge of the sustainability issues facing a specific place and has the potential to facilitate the dissemination of tacit knowledge.

This section presents an adapted version of Gruenewald's framework for management educators to identify commonalities with existing management concepts and to demonstrate that management educators and scholars have made significant progress towards the goals presented in this article. Moreover, the adoption of place-conscious management education (PCME) may only require a slight re-imagination of existing concepts. For each dimension, the paper illustrates how PCME can be utilized in the

classroom by detailing how a recent MBA class project's educational value was improved by evoking a sense of place with the students. The section concludes with further suggestions of strategies that may assist educators in incorporating PCME.

Project overview

In the fall of 2014, an MBA class on sustainability served as a team of consultants to a local not-for-profit organic farm in New York's Hudson Valley. For 15 years, the farm operated a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) sales model in which 'shareholders' purchased a subscription at the beginning of the season in order to receive a weekly selection of vegetables. The farm also hosted educational programming for all ages. Traditionally, the revenue from the CSA operations supported the overall maintenance of the farm, however, a confluence of unfortunate events led to the cancellation of the 2013 CSA. Although the farm retained the revenue from the shares sold, many of the shareholders failed to renew for the next year and, as a result, cast the survival of the farm into doubt. It was during this time of crisis that the board of directors approached the class to analyze the farm's cost structure and revenue model.

The board of directors and staff spoke with the students on multiple occasions and arranged access to the financial documents. After analyzing the materials and conducting a competitor analysis, the students presented their findings and recommendations to the board. Throughout the semester, Gruenewald's amended typology framed the class discussions and activities concerning the farm project. This strategy transformed a valuable pedagogical exercise into a reflective and meaningful lesson that resulted in tangible, region-specific solutions for the organization.

Next, a summary of the dimensions of Gruenewald's typology is presented, followed by a brief example of its application.

Perceptual

The perceptual dimension of Gruenewald's framework addresses the way in which we understand our surroundings. Gruenewald argues that society has become autistic to the world and educators must reconnect students to the cultural and natural worlds to cultivate an appreciation of place and develop the students' identity in relation to their location (Gruenewald, 2003).

Gruenewald's perception dimension may be the easiest component to integrate into the existing management scholarship as researchers have long recognized the effect of context upon a multitude of organizational outcomes, such as managers' perceptual and cognitive functions (Elsbach, Barr, & Hargadon, 2005; Fazey, Fazey, & Fazey, 2005; Whiteman & Cooper, 2000) and the manner in which an organization learns and works (Fazey et al., 2005; King, 1999; Tyre & Hippel, 1997). In fact, one can find the recognition of the influence of context at nearly the genesis of the management discipline; Elton Mayo's 1933 discovery of the impact of factory conditions upon worker productivity (2004).

The economic geography and regional development literatures on industrial clusters represent another approach to analyze the influence of place. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to provide a thorough review of the literature, a brief review of a few seminal articles may give a sense of this topic.¹ For example, Markusen (1996) proposed five models to facilitate the development of 'sticky places' where clusters may form. A few years later, Porter (2000) argued that though technological advances have eroded the importance of location for many firms, a focus on clusters may reveal that the competitive advantage of some firms may be attributable to the place in which they

¹ For a comprehensive review, see Eisingerich, Bell, and Tracey (2010)

reside. Feldman, Francis, and Bercovitz (2005) introduced agency into this discussion through their recognition of entrepreneurial activity's contribution to cluster formation. Finally, Gertler identified the relationship between tacit knowledge and context by demonstrating that the two exist in a reflexive relationship that 'both defines, and is defined by' one another (2003, p. 78), a concept that the following vignette illustrates.

In the MBA class, the instructor evoked the perceptual dimension of the place with a visit to the farm. During that time, the students observed the bucolic nature of the site and spoke with the president and farmer while watching the operations of the farm. The farm visit stoked the students' 'conscious engagement' (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 642) with the place and its people, as well reinforced a sense of accountability of the students to the farm's employees. Additionally, a number of the local students mentioned to the class their previous visit to the farm while in elementary school. By forming another connection to the farm, one that had shaped childhood experiences, the students recognized the impact the place had on their lives and the potential impact they would have on it.

Sociological

The sociological dimension of Gruenewald's typology emphasizes the symbiosis of 'place, identity, and cultural experience' (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 625). He recommends that educators better understand their influence upon their surroundings and the role of culture in the construction of place and its meaning by emphasizing the cultural characteristics that create shared meaning.

A number of resources exist to assist management educators with incorporating the sociological dimension into their classroom. For example, Shrivastava and Kennelly (2013) propose a research agenda for 'place-based enterprises' and identifies specific strategies management educators can deploy, such as mapping the communities' perspectives regarding globalization, to understand how those differing values impact the economic relationship between firms and those communities.

William Cronon's 'The Trouble with Wilderness' (1995), an account of society's relationship with wilderness from biblical times to present day, can help educators interested in adopting a historical, but still sociological perspective, of place. His account exposes not only the malleability of the term 'wilderness,' but also the manner in which the relationship oftentimes reflect broader social trends. Management educators may use this work to call attention to the changes to the prevailing economic perspective on natural resources in a specific area. For example, the Hudson River of New York reflects this changing perspective well, as it initially served solely as mechanism to transport goods and, later, as an industrial dumping ground. Through the work of the Riverkeepers, the river become recognized as a resource worth preserving only in the past few decades. Cronon's piece can be used to not only interpret this evolution, but to also compare similar transformations of other places.

The MBA class was comprised of students from nearby communities, as well as India and Czechoslovakia. The diversity of backgrounds enabled the students to explore the different approaches to agriculture in these areas, as well as the socio-economic implications of the CSA model. Specifically, the class composition prompted the students to analyze the characteristics of the CSA shareholders. Because the CSA model was unfamiliar to some, the students sought to determine the root motivations of these shareholders and the broader cultural components that enabled this revenue model to survive. Who was the customer? Why did they engage in this form of commerce? Why did they support this particular farm?

The answer to these questions may have differed slightly between shareholders, but the overall picture that emerged indicated that the unique blend of socio-economic factors and the farm's proximity to New York City created enough local demand to sustain the

farm. Moreover, the students determined that the farm may be challenged to survive in nearby communities that were either less wealthy or had higher land values. These inquiries also granted greater insight into the farm's customer base and, later, helped the farm further articulate their strategic mission to better serve the needs of the stakeholders.

Ideological

The third dimension of place-conscious education explores the dispersion of values across space. Gruenewald invokes Foucault to illustrate the power of space to induce conformity and track the spatial dynamics of imperialism. When ideology is 'spatialized' in this manner, educators can sketch the way in which surplus value moves between locations, as well as call attention to the resulting uneven development in these places (Soja, 1989).

Within the management field, discussions regarding the ideological dimension can be found in the work of critical management scholars, which uncovers the implicit values of the discipline and organizations. For example, Grey (2004) asserts that management education concepts are 'impregnated with values' (p. 179) and, at its core, management concerns the exercise of power. The ideological dimension can also foster an ethical approach to management education. As demonstrated earlier, stakeholder identification leads to a greater sense of accountability in both the students and instructors as it emphasizes the moral obligation of management educators to address problems that matter to the community at the local, national, and global levels (Flyvbjerg, 2001).

This dimension most prominently arose in the MBA class during a discussion regarding the previous farmers' decision to prioritize customers in Brooklyn over local CSA shareholders. Although class conversations around this topic did not explicitly touch upon the hegemonic component of space, the hierarchy of different markets was discussed, echoing Said's (1993) concept of uneven development. Students also explored the tension between the farm's identity as a local producer and the siren song of New York City's higher margins. A number of discussions ensued regarding how the 'export' decision impacted the legitimacy of the farm in the local community. Furthermore, the students considered the impact on brand equity in both the home market and in New York City. Finally, the class identified situations in which local markets might take precedent.

Political

The fourth dimension concerns the politics that girder place-based identities. Within this dimension, scholars have examined the politics of identity and the interweaving of culture, people, and places in relation to 'a global context of power, struggle, and resistance' (p. 629). Gruenewald (2003) draws from bell hooks' depiction of the spatial element of discrimination in her Kentucky home prior to Desegregation to illustrate this dimension. In a town separated by railroad tracks, only service-related forays, such as cleaning and cooking, were permitted to enter the white community. With each crossing of the border, differences in identity were reinforced and expanded. Moreover, Gruenewald (2003) contends that marginalized spaces nurture oppositional world views and he urges educators to draw lessons from those communities of resistance to advance a more just and representative society.

Situated firmly in the periphery of conventional agriculture, the farm engages in efforts to transform the food system through a dedication to social justice and organic agricultural techniques. Without the support of a community with similar values, the farm would be unable pursue such goals. This support necessitated consideration of the farm's viability within the context of the local community. Through this insight, students were able to understand the distance between the values espoused in the CSA community and conventional agricultural producers, as well as the challenges the

former faced when resisting the latter. Moreover, the current trend towards local agriculture in the region allowed the students to learn from other successful producers and led to the recommendation to increase restaurant sales.

Ecological

Ecology is the last dimension identified by Gruenewald and it affords educators the opportunity to scale down larger issues that cannot be directly experienced, such as the carrying capacity of the planet or climate change. Gruenewald (2003) suggests adopting a spatial perspective to this dimension by bringing the students to those sites impacted by those forces.

Consideration of the local context is 'pivotal if a firm is to claim adoption of a strong interpretation of sustainable development' (Valente, 2012, p. 436). For example, DeBoer and colleagues (2017) demonstrated the influence of location on environmental strategies, specifically the proximity to a 'green locale' or 'sacrosanct physical environment.' Additionally, tacit knowledge is often needed to enact proactive sustainable strategies. Reed (2008) observed that firms located near a national park enjoyed increased access to sources of environmental knowledge and were more likely to work with environmental NGOs.

The relationship between an individual's appreciation of place and sustainability is more established than that of the organization, so scholars often extrapolate these individual findings to infer the impact at the higher levels. Aldo Leopold wrote of the land ethic that develops when we allow the land to contribute to our sense of identity and may lead to a greater sense of stewardship in society (1949; Walck, 2003). Others, such as Thoreau and Wendell Berry, espoused the importance of an individual's connection to place and sustainability,

The link between place and sustainability has also been demonstrated the link empirically. Uzzel and associates (2002) uncovered a positive association between the degree to which one identifies with a place, the level of social cohesion within a community, and the sustainable behavior of individuals. Other studies have established a relationship between a sense of place and pro-environmental behavior such as recycling (Vaske & Kobrin, 2001), support for public parks (Carrus, Bonaiuto, & Bonnes, 2005), and water conservation, as well as a number of 'general ecological behaviors' (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). Thus, we see that an environmental connection to a place can precipitate individual pro-environmental behavior.

However, it is important to note that proactive environmental strategies do not need to be relegated to sacrosanct spaces. As William Cronon (1995) warns, situating wilderness 'out there' may promote less responsible behavior in the places in which we normally dwell. As such, educators may encourage students to question the nature/home dichotomy by identifying the artificiality of such a perspective. This can be accomplished through simple strategies such as drawing attention to natural phenomena in the local environment or by cultivating what John Burroughs referred to as the 'art of seeing things.'

Turning to management education, the majority of the work that explicitly draws on place-consciousness concerns the environmental impact of business decisions. For example, the Introduction to Business course at Rogers Williams University required the students to engage in a debate over a proposed liquefied natural gas plant in Fall River, MA. The site was located across a bay from the college, placing the campus directly in the delivery path. Since this issue was local and the students were one of the primary stakeholders, they were more likely to make deliberate decisions and recognize the complexity of the situation (Bosco, McKenzie, & Micken, 2005).

Similar to the Fall River example, educators can bring students to the local sites of environmental impact to address the ecological dimension of place-conscious management education. Unfortunately, the long history of corporate environmental degradation affords ample opportunities to integrate this dimension into the curriculum.

Yet, we should not default to a critical perspective when assessing the ecological dimension, as management educators can also explore the positive impacts companies have had on the local ecology. Guthey and Whiteman's (2009) study of the California wine industry illustrated that social and environmental benefits can occur when organizations actively engage with the local community. Other recent work around this topic has demonstrated that a sense of place effects managers' decisions regarding resource use in forestry operations and other natural resource management (Fazey et al., 2005; Fazey, Proust, Newell, Johnson, & Fazey, 2006; Folke, Pritchard, Berkes, Colding, & Svedin, 2007; Whiteman & Cooper, 2000).

Since the purpose of the consulting project was to improve the economic viability of the farm, the ecological benefits of organic agriculture were largely assumed. However, the class did briefly consider the challenges of sharing a property border with a conventional grower and identified a number of information sources related to this topic. Additionally, students brainstormed around additional revenue opportunities that would appeal to their customers. For example, one group of students proposed the farm host an annual pig roast in which all the ingredients would be sourced from the surrounding farms. Another group projected the net revenues from hosting weddings for customers looking for a rustic, upstate experience.

Introducing an economic dimension

Although Gruenewald addresses economic issues in his ideological and political dimension, in order to advance a more nuanced view of economic activity, it is necessary to introduce a distinct economic component to this framework. The economic dimension draws from the concept of localized learning (Malmberg & Maskell, 2006) and equips management educators with a vehicle to emphasize the unique characteristics of a local economy. The development of this dimension also owes a debt to the literature on tacit knowledge, which recognizes the relationship between proximity and tacit knowledge, as well as the potential for the latter to drive innovation (Gertler, 2003).

While scholars can deploy the economic dimension to challenge the shareholder primacy model, they can also explore some of the beneficial functions of economic activity as well, such as corporate social responsibility (McWilliams, 2000), social entrepreneurship (Mair & Marti, 2006), shared value (Porter & Kramer, 2011), and Benefit Corporations (Reiser, 2011). Adding an economic dimension can also spur local innovations that can help achieve the sustainability goals set forth by the United Nations to eradicate poverty, end discrimination, and combat climate change (Gertler, 2003; Leach et al., 2012; United Nations, 2015).

The economic geography literature illustrates ways in which local conditions can drive innovations. The globalized economy has transformed previously rare and valuable factors of production into 'ubiquities,' yet geographic clusters of specialized economic activity remain because some firms base their competitive advantage upon localized capabilities which are increasingly likely to be connected to, or originate from, the local knowledge base (Malmberg & Maskell, 2006).

It is important to recognize the reflexive nature of the economic dimension as well, as this dimension can influence other aspects of a place. The water crisis in Flint, MI offers a compelling case study of this impact, as the erosion of the manufacturing sector in the 1980's and 1990's in the city (economic dimension) led to dramatic demographic shifts (sociological dimension) that decimated the tax base. Facing diminished tax revenues, public officials sought new cost saving measures (political dimension), eventually

leading to the decision to source water for the municipality from the Flint River. As has been documented in both the popular and academic press, this decision eventually spawned a public health crisis when lead was discovered in the water supply (ecological dimension).

By no means are such innovations purely economic and novel approaches to local sustainability issues can add to the resiliency of an economy. Moreover, these strategies avoid unilateral solutions and instead draw from the economic and ecological settings of the region; thus increasing their likelihood of adoption (Leach et al., 2012).

The class explored the economic dimension on both the micro and macro levels. From a macro perspective, the students analyzed the increased competition the farm faced since its founding in 1992. It was the first not-for-profit CSA in the region, however the farm now competes with at least five different CSA's within a twenty-mile radius and, as mentioned earlier, much of the class discussion was devoted to discovering new revenue models to help the farm succeed in a more competitive environment. On a micro scale, the class considered the farm's pricing strategies relative to its competitors, as well as the existing cost structure, with a particular emphasis on paying living wages that reflect cost of living in the region. While the class's recommendations could be applied to most small organic farms in the United States, they also suggested tactics that were distinct to the Hudson Valley. For example, the students proposed the farm pursue hops production to take advantage of New York State's recent Farm Brewing Law and the burgeoning microbrewery industry. Also, as mentioned earlier, the proximity to the New York City market was projected to provide enough demand for a few weddings each year.

In conclusion, the application of Gruenewald's amended typology created a mechanism through which the class could explore their community and make proposals that fit the characteristics of the place. The students understood that their decisions did not just impact an abstracted concept of an employee or customer, but actual people, members of a shared community. This realization led to a more careful analysis than if they had been presented with an exercise drawn from a hypothetical or historical example. Thus, by situating the lesson within this specific community, the students were able to engage in a more visceral and rewarding learning experience and to generate value for the community as well.

Table 1:

An Overview of Gruenwald's Amended Typology and Suggested Pedagogical Methods

Dimension of Place-Conscious Management Education	Suggested Pedagogical Methods
Perceptual: promotes a connection to natural world	Out of class activities, such as field trips to locations impacted by a company's activities. Seek to understand how the company's presence impacts one's experience with the natural and built environment. Talk with residents impacted by the changes. Provides students with a 'stock of common images' (Money & Edwards, 2001, p. 185) and a shared experience from which to ground the concepts taught in the classroom.
Sociological: highlights the cultural characteristics of a place and recognition of the place-making process	Internship or Practical Co-ops can be valuable tools to emphasize the sociological dimension as it provides an immersive experience in which students can develop hands-on experiences and apply their knowledge and skills (Mooney & Edwards, 2001).
Ideological: analyzes the differences in values between different spaces	In volunteering or service outreach initiatives students assist in charity event within the community. Although such practices, such as working in a soup kitchen, may not enhance the students' existing skill, these experiences provide an opportunity to encounter a more diverse population and address immediate issues within the community. As such, students may recognize the multiplicity of viewpoints and develop a greater consciousness of social issues (Mooney & Edwards, 2001)
Political: recognizes the politics of place-based identities	Case studies, specifically of cooptation of place identity (and the interpretation by) when firms association brand with location 'not their own.' Issues such as ownership of identity - companies like FIJI Water.
Ecological: considers local ecological impacts and the unique ecological conditions	Site visits to locations of environmental degradation (such as GE and the Hudson River) or improvements.
Economic: investigates the impact of global trends upon local economies	Consultancy teams or service learning: Advocacy can serve to unify the various dimensions of place-based learning and engage with the student in a dialectical process where the experience enriches the course content. While the course content contextualizes the service work by highlighting the social dynamics and relationships between the participants (Moorey & Edwards, 2001).

Additional pedagogical strategies

While this paper focused on a specific course to illustrate the benefits of PCME, a number of other strategies exist for educators to incorporate these ideas. To develop the perceptual dimension of PCME, educators may wish to arrange opportunities for the students to encounter those surroundings and focus on the unique features of the place. For example, during class visits to locations impacted by a company's activities management educators can explain how a firm's presence impacts the interaction with the natural and built environments and urge students to speak with the community

members effected by these activities. Through these experiences, the students may construct a 'stock of common images' (Mooney & Edwards, 2001, p. 185) from which to draw when discussing more abstract concepts, such as the carrying capacity of a region.

The immersive nature of internships and practical co-ops can also assist management educators in developing students' place-specific or tacit knowledge and skills (Mooney & Edwards, 2001). For example, students can use an HR internship to better understand the subtle differences in hiring practices for a firm that operates in two distinct locations. Management educators can also provide volunteer or service outreach opportunities for their students, such as assisting in a charity event or working in a soup kitchen. Such practices present a forum for students to encounter a more diverse population, help develop a greater conscious of the social issues relevant to the community, and celebrate intellectual pluralism by recognizing the validity of other knowledges; all of which may improve empathy and increase the students' ability to interact with a more diverse customer base in the future (Clegg & Ross-Smith, 2003; Mooney & Edwards, 2001). If educators wish to strike a critical tone, they can use these experiences to identify the assumptions, goals, and location of each group, as well as their relevant power structures.

Case studies can explore the political dimension of the typology and may reveal instances of cooptation of place identity, such as when a firm borrows a location's identity to which they have little claim. The case study of FIJI Water (McMaster & Nowak, 2009) recounts the efforts of Canadian owner David Gilmour to not only extract the island nation's water, but also its image and name. Management educators can use this case to discuss topics such as ownership of a place's identity and the fair compensation for its use. Cases can also be useful to uncover the 'structural factors [that] influence individual actions, how these actions are constructed, and their structural consequences' (Flyvbjerg, 2001 quoted in Clegg & Ross-Smith, 2003, p. 90). Using the FIJI water case as an example, a place-conscious approach can explore the structural factors that create demand for bottled water, such as a global market that externalizes the sourcing and disposal costs of the product. Discussion can then move towards an exploration of how and why water from a certain location may be more desirable. After which, the class can delve into the impacts of water extraction from these desirable locations, focusing specifically on the manner in which the culture, economy, and ecology have changed as a result of this activity.

Management educators may encourage their students to seek to opportunities to participate in a consultancy team or service learning to explore the economic dimension of PCME. While consultancy teams have long been used in business education, service learning projects have been typically associated with non-profit organizations. However, recently management educators have realized that they can develop the students' sense of morality, practical skills, and awareness of social issues (Kenworthy-U'Ren & Peterson, 2005). Both techniques can be used to engage the student in a dialectical process in which the experience enriches the course content, while the course content contextualizes the experience by calling attention to the social dynamics between the participants (Mooney & Edwards, 2001).

Class discussions may also help students understand the economic dimension of place-conscious management education. Here, the class can explore topics such as the reciprocity between the economic activity and governmental regulations of a particular place, as well as the local identity that forms as a result of interactions between economic activity, individuals, and organizations. Additionally, the aforementioned concepts such as CSR, social entrepreneurship, and shared value will facilitate the integration of the economic dimension of PCME into the classroom. For example, Porter and Kramer's (2011) work on creating shared value can be used to frame this concept as they state that global firms are more likely to generate a competitive advantage when they develop strong connections to local communities.

Malmberg and Maskell (2006) identify three dimensions of localized learning to which we can adapt to the classroom: vertical, horizontal, and community based. The vertical dimension for Malmberg and Maskell consists of firms that occupy different stages of the supply chain, such as the transmission of knowledge from the supplier to the buyer. For the purposes of the current argument, the vertical dimension describes the learning that takes place between an educator and a student. Thus, the strategies previously identified can be applied to this dimension of localized knowledge.

In horizontal learning, firms learn by observing peers. The obvious analog for the current application is student-to-student learning. Proximity and shared experiences allow for unplanned and instinctive observation in which students can gain tacit knowledge regarding successful strategies and behaviors. Furthermore, students facing similar conditions in close proximity will be able to discern the strengths and weaknesses of their peers, as well as themselves.

Finally, localized learning can occur through everyday interactions with the community, a process known as 'local buzz' (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004). Thus, the sharing of experience and emulation of neighbors' behaviors that occur in repeated face-to-face interactions drive down the costs of learning as students learn to adopt the language and interpretive schemas of their community (Malmberg & Maskell, 2006).

These final two dimensions of localized learning also can help overcome one of the main issues of tacit knowledge, the inability of the instructor to fully articulate the full array of keys to success (Gertler, 2003). Just as the experienced cyclist struggles to explain how to ride a bicycle, so too is tacit knowledge best gained through observation and practice (Polanyi, 1966).

Conclusion

This paper urges educators to re-situate their lessons within a more place conscious approach, yet it does not advocate the abandonment of existing management education methodologies, nor does it suggest to focus solely on local phenomena. While such an explicit focus upon place remains scarce in the management literature, it is implicit in a number of dominant theories within the field. According to the resource based view of the firm, the resources available to a firm are often tied to location (DeBoer et al., 2017). Likewise, institutional theory considers the economic, social, and political contexts of a firm's actions; characteristics that are often determined by location (Rivera, 2010).

As stated earlier, business educators have long recognized the richness of real world experience and, as such, one goal of this paper is to illustrate the potential of place-conscious management education (PCME). Moreover, a sense of place is vital to sustainability (Guthey et al., 2014). It nurtures a deeper understanding of the interconnections between the social, environmental, and economic realms and thus can lead to more effective teaching strategies, and ultimately, greater innovation (Guthey et al., 2014; Rusinko, 2010; Starik et al., 2010).

The aim of this article is to provide theoretically-grounded pedagogical strategies to nudge the field closer to an integration of PCME and existing management education approaches. PCME may allow us to move away from the 'negative problem' of management theories and education (i.e. being less bad) (Ghoshal, 2005) and towards a better understanding of value creation within specific locations. Perhaps this article will ignite scholarly activity around PCME, so that educators can begin to reconsider management education within the communities they reside.

It is also important to note that each place is different. There is a strong correlation between the degree to which a space is defined cognitively and the likelihood the place will be a 'target of attachment' (Lewicka, 2011, p. 213). As such, some places may

initially be better suited for the strategies outlined here. However, this does not mean that educators in less-defined places should not pursue place-conscious approaches. Just as there is a reflexivity between managers and places, so also must educators recognize the active role students in creating a sense of place. As educators, this recognition may aid us in creating more inclusive and cohesive classrooms. Indeed, it is through such practices that management educators may be able engage in the place-making process and strengthen the unique identity of their place.

A sense of place is fluid itself; its existence relies upon the ebb and flow of each of these factors' influence (Guthey et al., 2014). As we promote the uniqueness of a place, we also need 'to balance the *ethos* of concrete attachment and thick boundaries impermeable to the outsider with the *demos* of plural identities and thin boundaries permeable beyond the local' (Williams & Van Patten, 2006 quoted in Lewicka, 2011, p. 226). In other words, we must both celebrate the current identity of a place, while embracing the fluid nature of potential future identities; a sense of place should not ossify.

Gruenewald's typology represents but one approach to place-conscious education. Regardless of one's approach, the hope is that management educators will continue to promote place-based perspectives to education and further develop the pedagogical tools that will improve students' chances for success in their communities.

References

- Bathelt, H., Malmberg, A., & Maskell, P. (2004). Clusters and knowledge: Local buzz, global pipelines and the process of knowledge creation. *Progress in Human Geography*, 28(1), 31-56.
- Beatley, T. (2004). *Native to Nowhere: Sustaining Home and Community in a Global Age*. Washington, DC: Island Press.
- Bosco, S. M., Mckenzie, B. W., & Micken, K. S. (2005). Weaver's Cove Energy Versus the City of Fall River, Massachusetts: An Experience in the Concepts of Stakeholders, Economic Impact, and Social Obligation/Social Responsibility. *Organization Management Journal*, 2(2), 80-96.
- Carrus, G., Bonaiuto, M., & Bonnes, M. (2005). Environmental concern, regional identity, and support for protected areas in Italy. *Environment and Behavior*, 37(2), 237-257.
- Casey, E. S. (1996). How to get from space to place in a fairly short stretch of time: Phenomenological prolegomena. In S. Feld & K. H. Baso (Eds.), *Senses of place* (Vol. 27, pp. 13-52). Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.
- Clegg, S. R., & Ross-Smith, A. (2003). Revising the boundaries: Management education and learning in a postpositivist world. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 2(1), 85-98.
- Cronon, W. (1995). The trouble with wilderness; or, getting back to the wrong nature In W. Cronon (Ed.), *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature* (pp. 69-90). New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.
- DeBoer, J., Panwar, R., & Rivera, J. (2017). Toward A Place-Based Understanding of Business Sustainability: The Role of Green Competitors and Green Locales in Firms' Voluntary Environmental Engagement. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, n/a-n/a. doi:10.1002/bse.1957
- Eisingerich, A. B., Bell, S. J., & Tracey, P. (2010). How can clusters sustain performance? The role of network strength, network openness, and environmental uncertainty. *Research Policy*, 39(2), 239-253.
- Elmes, M., Jiusto, S., Whiteman, G., Hersh, R., & Guthey, G. (2012). Teaching social entrepreneurship and innovation from the perspective of place and place-making. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 11(4), 533-554.

- Elsbach, K. D., Barr, P. S., & Hargadon, A. B. (2005). Identifying situated cognition in organizations. *Organization Science*, 16(4), 422-433.
- Fazey, I. R. A., Fazey, J. A., & Fazey, D. M. (2005). Learning more effectively from experience. *Ecology and Society*, 10(2), 4 [online].
- Fazey, I. R. A., Proust, K., Newell, B., Johnson, B., & Fazey, J. A. (2006). Eliciting the implicit knowledge and perceptions of on-ground conservation managers of the Macquarie Marshes. *Ecology and Society*, 11(1), 25 [online].
- Feldman, M., Francis, J., & Bercovitz, J. (2005). Creating a cluster while building a firm: Entrepreneurs and the formation of industrial clusters. *Regional Studies*, 39(1), 129-141.
- Folke, C., Pritchard, L., Berkes, F., Colding, J., & Svedin, U. (2007). The problem of fit between ecosystems and institutions: Ten years later. *Ecology and Society*, 12(1), 30 [online].
- Freeman, R. E., & Newkirk, D. (2008). Business as human enterprise: Implications for education. In S. Gregg & J. James R. Stoner (Eds.), *Rethinking Business Management: Examining the Foundations of Business Education* (pp. 131-148). Princeton, NJ: The Witherspoon Institute.
- Gertler, M. S. (2003). Tacit knowledge and the economic geography of context, or the undefinable tacitness of being (there). *Journal of Economic Geography*, 3(1), 75-99.
- Ghoshal, S. (2005). Bad management theories are destroying good management practices. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 4(1), 75-91.
- Gieryn, T. F. (2000). A space for place in sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26, 463-496.
- Grey, C. (2004). Reinventing business schools: The contribution of critical management education. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 3(2), 178-186.
- Gruenewald, D. A. (2003). Foundations of place: A multidisciplinary framework for place-conscious education. *American Educational Research Journal*, 40(3), 619-654.
- Guthey, G., & Whiteman, G. (2009). Social and ecological transitions: Winemaking in California. *Emergence: Complexity & Organization*, 11, 37-48.
- Guthey, G., Whiteman, G., & Elmes, M. (2014). Place and sense of place: Implications for organizational studies of sustainability. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 23(3), 254-265.
- Hubbard, P., Kitchin, R., & Valentine, G. (2008). *Key Texts in Human Geography*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Jolly, F., Whiteman, G., Atkinson, M., & Radu, I. (2011). Managing and educating outside: A Cree hunter's perspective on management education. *Journal of Management Education*, 35(1), 27-50.
- Kenworthy-U'Ren, A. L., & Peterson, T. O. (2005). Service-learning and management education: Introducing the "WE CARE" approach. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 4(3), 272-277.
- King, A. (1999). Retrieving and transferring embodied data: Implications for the management of interdependence within organizations. *Management Science*, 45(7), 918-935.
- Leach, M., Rokstrom, J., Raskin, P., Scoones, I. C., Stirling, A. C., Smith, A., Arond, E. (2012). Transforming innovation for sustainability. *Ecology and Society*, 17(2), 11.
- Leopold, A. (1949). *A Sand County Almanac with Essays on Conservation* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Lewicka, M. (2011). Place attachment: How far have we come in the last 40 years? *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 31(3), 207-230.
- Mair, J., & Marti, I. (2006). Social entrepreneurship research: A source of explanation, prediction, and delight. *Journal of World Business*, 41(1), 36-44.
- Malmberg, A., & Maskell, P. (2006). Localized learning revisited. *Growth and Change*, 37(1), 1-18.
- Markusen, A. (1996). Sticky places in slippery space: A typology of industrial districts. *Economic Geography*, 72(3), 293-313.
- Mayo, E. (2004). *The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization*. New York: Routledge.

- FIJI Water and Corporate Social Responsibility - Green Makeover or "Greenwashing"? 909A09 (Richard Ivey School of Business 2009).
- McWilliams, A. (2000). Corporate Social Responsibility. In *Wiley Encyclopedia of Management*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Mooney, L. A., & Edwards, B. (2001). Experiential learning in sociology: Service learning and other community-based learning initiatives. *Teaching Sociology*, 29(2), 181-194.
- Polanyi, M. (1966). The logic of tacit inference. *Philosophy*, 41(155), 1-18.
- Porter, M. E. (2000). Location, competition, and economic development: Local clusters in a global economy. *Economic Development Quarterly*, 14(1), 15-34.
- Porter, M. E., & Kramer, M. R. (2011). Creating shared value. *Harvard Business Review*, 89(1/2), 62-77.
- Reed, M. S. (2008). Stakeholder participation for environmental management: a literature review. *Biological Conservation*, 141(10), 2417-2431.
- Reiser, D. B. (2011). Benefit Corporations-A Sustainable Form of Organization. *Wake Forest Law Review*, 46, 591-625.
- Relph, E. (1976). *Place and Placelessness (Research in Planning and Design)*. London: Pion.
- Rivera, J. E. (2010). *Business and Public Policy: Responses to Environmental and Social Protection Processes*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Rusinko, C. A. (2010). Integrating sustainability in management and business education: A matrix approach. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 9(3), 507-519.
- Said, E. W. (1993). *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Scannell, L., & Gifford, R. (2010). The relations between natural and civic place attachment and pro-environmental behavior. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 30(3), 289-297.
- Shrivastava, P., & Kennelly, J. J. (2013). Sustainability and place-based enterprise. *Organization & Environment*, 26(1), 83-101.
- Soja, E. W. (1989). *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*. New York: Verso.
- Starik, M., Rands, G., Marcus, A. A., & Clark, T. S. (2010). From the Guest Editors: In Search of Sustainability in Management Education. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 9(3), 377-383.
- Tuan, Y.-F. (1977). *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Tyre, M. J., & Hippel, E. v. (1997). The Situated Nature of Adaptive Learning in Organizations. *Organization Science*, 8(1), 71-83.
- United Nations, U. (2015). Principles for Responsible Management Education. Retrieved from <http://www.unprme.org/>
- Uzzell, D., Pol, E., & Badenas, D. (2002). Place identification, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability. *Environment and Behavior*, 34(1), 26-53.
- Valente, M. (2012). Indigenous resource and institutional capital: The role of local context in embedding sustainable community development. *Business & Society*, 51(3), 409-449.
- Vaske, J. J., & Kobrin, K. C. (2001). Place attachment and environmentally responsible behavior. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 32(4), 16-21.
- Walck, C. (2003). Using the concept of land to ground the teaching of management and the natural environment. *Journal of Management Education*, 27(2), 205-219.
- Whiteman, G., & Cooper, W. H. (2000). Ecological embeddedness. *Academy of Management Journal*, 43(6), 1265-1282.
- Williams, D. R., & Van Patten, S. R. (2006). Home and away? Creating identities and sustaining places in a multi-centered world. In N. McIntyre, D. R. Williams, & K. McHugh (Eds.), *Multiple dwelling and tourism: Negotiating place, home and identity* (pp. 32-50). Cambridge, MA: CAB.